

EMERGENCY
HOMELESS
RESPONSE

13 AUGUST 2013

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Issue
 - High concentration of homeless poverty in the city of Columbia
 - Disproportionately affecting the downtown districts of the city
 - Business, neighborhoods and the homeless are suffering under the weight of un-responded to poverty
 - Businesses are now visibly and vocally voicing their frustration with the city's lack of action and urgency

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “we are now experiencing an environment where our staff members and our guests no longer feel safe even within the confines of our building. This nexus of perception and reality makes it virtually impossible for us, or anybody, to create a sustainable business model.... I urge you to move quickly to garner results”
 - *Fred Martin, President, Mast General Store*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “I am very concerned that Columbia’s downtown has become a magnet for homeless people...[the environment is] not only making our employees, tenants and residents feel uncomfortable, but also hindering our ability to attract new residents and businesses to downtown...I would like to see both City Council and the people of the Midlands put all differences aside and do what is best for the greater good of the community. ”
 - *Ben D. Arnold, President, Arnold Family Companies*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “I want my employees and clients to feel secure when they work in and visit our business. The homeless deserve to be treated with respect but in return they have to treat our city, our properties, our businesses and our residents with the same degree of respect....The history of the homeless situation in our city is filled with empty promises, confusing rhetoric and lack of accountability...I will be there every step of the way to support this most worthy plan.”
 - *Eric S. Bland, Bland Richter, LLP*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “I know it is a serious and complicated and emotional issue, and we both know that the current approaches are not working. The fact that some individuals are helped by current approaches is not justification for failure to develop and implement better strategies, following the examples of cities that have had success.”
 - *Darryl Williams, Resident of Congaree Vista neighborhood*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “The downtown business district is at a crossroad. Economic development is an important issue for the city. A prosperous, vibrant city needs a prosperous, vibrant downtown area that is perceived as having an environment that is safe for all; families, women and children...The problems are increasing and becoming more volatile...A serious incident could occur at any time with tragic repercussions...The future success of the city depends on what action the council takes now.
 - *Rev. Fr. Michael Platanis, Protopresbyter, Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “As small business owners on Main Street we see first hand how the homeless crisis is affecting the city...Unfortunately it seems the people who make their living off of caring for the homeless are the ones making all the noise at these meetings. They've had 20 years to fix the problem and it has only gotten worse thus insuring their paychecks stay safe. Please think about the everyday citizens, the revitalization of Columbia and the safety of everyone.”
 - *Jessica & Joe Kastner, Owners, Paradise Ice*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “I believe that this recent surge in business announcements and excitement can be stifled by the perceptions and fears of people who work, live or visit the downtown if we do not do something now. We are at a crossroads of successful economic development or returning the Center City to empty retail spaces...As the saying goes if we keep doing the same things we will keep getting the same results.”
 - *Tom Prioreschi, Capitol Places*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The Impact
 - “There is currently a high concentration of homelessness in the City of Columbia, with the most heavily concentrated areas being in the downtown district. As a result, the growth of economic development is being hindered, and business owners are beginning to look elsewhere to set up shop.”
 - *Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- The community is now dealing with two issues and Columbia must respond to both:
 - 1. The need for a long term, sustainable response to an ongoing problem so that the City of Columbia never finds itself in this predicament again.*
 - 2. An acute emergency in the heart of the city that is having a highly detrimental impact upon the commerce community, downtown neighborhoods and the perception of safety and quality of life in the capital city*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- 1. Long Term Response
 - Provide four months for those who so desire to craft plans for meeting the 6 Goals set forth by the community through the community input sessions held earlier in 2013
 - Plans should also include:
 - Detailed benchmarks (timing, costs, etc)
 - Performance measurements
 - Accountability protocols
 - Sustainability plan
 - Timeline for unwinding city investment in homeless services
 - Etcetera

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- 2. Emergency Response
 - The city must provide immediate relief to the business community, neighborhoods and the homeless
 - Failure to address the acute problem will lead to potentially disastrous impacts to the commerce community in Columbia

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- 2. Emergency Response
 - Assets currently available for emergency response
 - \$500,000 emergency shelter allocation & facility
 - Existing police force
 - Community partners
 - City public information office to promote response protocol
 - Business and neighborhood organizations to disseminate response protocol
 - Churches and other volunteer organizations already providing feeding and other services to the needy
 - Existing service providers

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Seven month emergency response to be supplanted by permanent response at end of emergency shelter season starting in April 2014
 - *Permanent response plan cannot be centered at emergency shelter site or in downtown business district*

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Run emergency shelter 24x7 from September 2013 – March 2014.
 - Represents two additional months of operation
 - Shelter already slated to operate from November – March

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Staff estimate of cost to run emergency shelter 24x7 for seven months is \$1,700,000
 - Only \$500,000 has been budgeted for emergency response
 - **Shortfall of \$1,200,000**

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Christ Central Ministries is willing to work with the city, community, other providers and the organization's 92 mission stations around the state of South Carolina to help the city move towards a solution to our problem.
 - Building on the expertise gained through the operation of the 2012 – 13 emergency shelter, Christ Central Ministries is prepared to work with the City of Columbia to execute this Emergency Response within the present budgetary confinements
 - **A partnership representing a \$1.2MM gift to the taxpayers of Columbia**

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Additional infrastructure
 - 3 transport vans for moving clients to the emergency shelter and to external service providers and services
 - NO FOOT TRAFFIC. PERIOD.
 - Dedicated telephone number for community and business response when a person in need is identified.
 - Portable HVAC & Portable kitchen for meal preparation
 - Large exterior tent for service providers and volunteers
 - Officer located at Williams & Laurel Street to monitor and control foot traffic
 - Foot patrol officers for the Downtown BID as requested by the CCP and Chamber of Commerce

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Oversight Committee
 - Bi-weekly meetings. Voice recorded by the city clerk's office. Detailed minutes taken by clerk's office.
 - Ensures any and all risks and impacts are quantified and mitigated efficiently, effectively and transparently
 - Comprised of independent representatives of impacted constituent groups (non-financially conflicted)
 - Bob Wynn – President of Arsenal Hill
 - Victoria and John Dozier – Robert Mills District
 - Jeff Pioreschi – City Center Partnership
 - Elmwood Park & Cottontown representative
 - Chamber of Commerce Representative(s)

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Enforce existing ordinances once provision for those in need is available
 - *NO PERSON WILL BE SUBJECT TO ANY LAW IN A MANNER THAT IS DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER CITIZEN*
 - All public feeding relocated to emergency shelter site
 - Ex-prisoners delivered to the city limits of Columbia released via intake at the emergency shelter during pre-determined hours

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

- Emergency Response Proposal
 - Develop and receive proposals for long-term response the first week of January 2014.
 - Begin scaling into full implementation of long-term response April 01, 2014
 - Prepare emergency shelter parcel for sale for private development along Columbia Canal

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE



City owned
Butler
Buildings
should be
relocated to
less
commercially
valuable
property

EMERGENCY HOMELESS RESPONSE

Short Term Emergency Response

24x7 shelter operation
All meals served on site
Providers and volunteers
Enforce all ordinances
No foot traffic
Three vans shuttling clients to services and shelter
No out of city dumping
Within confines of \$500k budget
Oversight committee

Long Term Planning Committee –

Meet the 6 Community Goals:

Ike McLeese & Lee Bussell (Co-Facilitators)
Victoria & John Dozier
Bob Wynn
Hal Stevenson
Fred Martin
Jimmy Jones
Pastor Baker
Councilman Runyan
Others

Other interested parties may bring forth their own proposals or create their own committee to move toward resolve on the issue.

Preparing for Execution

Council endorses path forward
Pre-Implementation Phase preparing for execution launch in April

Long Term Execution Phase

Existing emergency shelter permanently shuttered
Emergency shelter parcel prepared for sale

01 Sept 2013

Emergency Shelter Opens Two Months Early

Sept – Dec 2013

Long Term Response Colaboration, Planning & Stess Testing Period

Jan – Mar 2014

City Council Endorsement of Path forward and Pre-Implementation Phase

01 April 2014

Long Term Plan Execution Start